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The
Sunset Beacon

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Sunset Author Pens Children's Book on Climate Adaptation

By Judy Goddess

Sunset resident Margaret Graf is known to many of her neighbors as the founder and director of Senior Power, a community group for older people dedicated to sharing resources and education to make the aging journey less isolating.

Before the pandemic, Senior Power held monthly meetings in the Community Room at the Taraval Police Station. Isolation among seniors became an even more intense issue with the pandemic. In an effort to keep the group together and to respond to the community's greater need for connection and resources, Graf began a weekly newsletter.

Articles speak to her Irish background, local events and political concerns including climate change.

"Knowing that there are many more scholarly experts than I who had broached this field, I decided to take an imaginative approach by reporting the personal experiences of climate adaptation through the

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Margaret Graf, founder and director of Senior Power, a group dedicated to making aging less isolating, with her new book, "The Adventures of Rob Raven: Climate Change by Wing & Tail." ***Photo by Judy Goddess.***

Two Arrested In Connection To Body Found In Golden Gate Park

By John Ferrannini

The San Francisco district attorney's office has opted not to file charges – at least, not yet – against two people who were arrested in connection with the death of a San Francisco resident whose body was discovered in Golden Gate Park during the Outside Lands festival last summer.

Alexander Madden, 26, and Emilia Beckhusen, 33, were arrested on Nov. 2 and Nov. 4, respectively, according to a news release from the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD).

The three-day Outside Lands Music and Arts Festival brings a couple of hundred thousand people to the park on San Francisco's west side every summer. It was winding down on Aug. 13 when officers responded to a report of "an unresponsive adult female" in the area of Fulton Street and 22nd Avenue.

"Officers summoned medics to the scene. Paramedics from the San Francisco Fire Department responded, and the victim was declared deceased at the scene," the statement said.

The death was declared suspicious by the City's medical examiner, who later ruled the cause of death undetermined. The woman was identified as 37-year-old San Francisco resident Kelly Koike.

Investigators zeroed in on Madden and Beckhusen as suspects – at least in the disposal of Koike's body. On Nov. 2, Madden was arrested on a Ramey warrant for unlawful disposal of human remains and conspiracy.

Two days later, Beckhusen was also arrested on a Ramey warrant for unlawful disposal of human remains and con-

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Proposed Light Show in GG Park Alarms Environmentalists

By Thomas K. Pendergast

Local environmentalists are highlighting concerns about a proposal to light up the Botanical Garden in Golden Gate Park at night during the winter months and the impact this may have on plants and wildlife.

Bringing night lighting to the garden is the brainchild of the Gardens of Golden Gate Park (GGGP), a public-private partnership between the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department and the San Francisco Botanical Garden Society, which jointly operate the Conservatory of Flowers, Japanese Tea Garden and San Francisco Botanical Garden.

A request for proposals (RFP) issued on Oct. 12 "seeks to develop a high quality and unique winter lights installation … intended to drive members and visitation to the gardens after regular admission hours, from mid-November 2024 through early January 2025. The Gardens are also open to multi-year proposals."

The deadline to submit proposals was Nov. 15 and, as of press time, the Gardens expect to select a proposal by Nov. 29.

"We received six proposals," the GGGP's Director of Advancement Brendan Lange said in an email. "The selection committee is reviewing the proposals and will make a decision and let the proposed partner know by Dec. 1."

"The Gardens' staff leadership team, in consultation with the Recreation and Park Department, decided to issue the RFP," he said. "The partner selection will go to the nonprofit's board on Nov. 30 and a more detailed plan and proposal at a later date. The Gardens' staff leadership team voted unanimously to put out a request for proposal to learn more about a potential winter lights exhibit at the Gardens."

According to the RFP, GGGP and the selected "con-

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Trocadero Repair Bill Ensnared in Administrative Red Tape

By Thomas K. Pendergast

A resolution approving up to $1.85 million for repairs to the Trocadero Clubhouse in Stern Grove was approved by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, although District 1 Supervisor Connie Chan criticized the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department for bungling the emergency bailout.

During an overnight winter storm on March 11, an 85-foot-tall eucalyptus tree adjacent to the clubhouse fell into and through the building, severely damaging the second story and creating water damage.

Built in 1892 as a roadhouse and inn under the direction of George W. Green, the official city landmark is one of the earliest buildings in the Parkside area and one of the only extant 19th-century structures remaining in southwestern San Francisco.

The building is also architecturally significant as an excellent and well-preserved example of Stick-Eastlake architectural style.

A Nov. 1 report by the SF Budget and Legislative Analyst (BLA) said the department is working with Architectural Resources Group Conservation Services (ARG) on preparing a bid to award a contract for repairs later that month. The department did not, however, use a competitive bidding process because of the timelines required for FEMA reimbursement.

During a March 11 storm, an 85-foot-tall eucalyptus tree fell onto the roof of the historic Trocadero Clubhouse at Stern Grove causing significant damage. ***Photo courtesy of SF Rec. and Park.***

The BLA notes that although ARG has already completed design drawings required to meet U.S. Department of the Interior standards for historic buildings, and approvals have been received by the Historic Preservation Division of the SF Planning Department, along with the Department of Building Inspection, the project must be completed by Oct. 3, 2024, to meet FEMA reimbursement deadlines.

To date, the BLA report says, the department has incurred $20,043 in costs for ARG design work, which is not included in the $1.85 million estimate and not eligible for FEMA reimbursement.

"Through the evaluation, we identified the fact that the San

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Looking Back

Kinen Carvala

Pan-Pacific Expo

How could the organizer behind one successful canal fail at building another?

Oct. 14, 1911, was planned to be a celebration at the Polo Field in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. Despite the damage suffered by the City in the 1906 earthquake and fire, the City was determined to celebrate its rebirth by hosting the upcoming Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) in 1915.

The exposition was a celebration not only for San Francisco, but also for the United States which was set to succeed in constructing the Panama Canal, which would shave 5,200 miles off of ships' voyages between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans by cutting through Central America and avoiding going around the southern tip of South America.

French diplomat Ferdinand de Lesseps's plan to connect the Mediterranean and Red Seas led to the sea-level Suez Canal opening in 1869. He planned for another sea-level canal through Panama, then part of Colombia, though his success in the flat Egyptian desert was not repeated in the mountainous Panamanian jungle, according to the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

With at least 20,000 construction workers dead and countless others incapacitated from tropical diseases, like yellow fever and malaria, the French attempt to construct the Panama Canal was abandoned in 1889, according to the Harvard Library.

On Feb. 15, 1898, the American naval ship USS Maine exploded while visiting the Spanish colony of Cuba. The U.S. thought that Spain was behind the explosion, leading to the Spanish-American War.

The USS Oregon left San Francisco for a 67-day voyage around South America to reach the Caribbean and to defeat Spain in the Battle of Santiago near Cuba, according to the U.S. Army publication "The Panama Canal: An Army's Enterprise."

The Spanish-American War spurred the U.S. to consider building a transoceanic canal through Central America to reduce transit time between America's coasts, according to historian Dr. Heather M. Haley. The Philippines were transferred from Spain to the U.S. in the Treaty of Paris signed on Dec. 10, 1898, which resolved the Spanish-American War.

In 1903, the U.S. helped Panama gain independence from Colombia; the U.S. and Panama signed the 1903 Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty so the U.S. could build the Panama Canal and control a five-mile zone on either side of the canal. William Howard Taft, an American circuit court judge, reluctantly agreed in 1900 to oversee an American legal system being implemented in the Philippines at the behest of President William McKinley, with the promise that McKinley would later appoint Taft to the Supreme Court, according to "The Bully Pulpit" by Doris Kearns Goodwin.

Panama-Pacific International Exposition groundbreaking, 1911. President William Howard Taft ceremonially turns over the first shovel of earth at the Polo Field in Golden Gate Park. ***Photo courtesy of a Private Collector; Western Neighborhoods Project/OpenSFHistory.***

McKinley was assassinated in September 1901 (covered in a February 2021 "Looking Back" column) and successor President Theodore Roosevelt added Taft to his cabinet as secretary of war in 1904 (akin to the modern secretary of defense). Roosevelt also had Taft supervise the Second Isthmian Canal Commission (created in 1904) for constructing the Panama Canal.

The Commission limited disease spread caused by mosquitos by draining still water, cutting grass and applying pesticides, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Instead of a canal at sea level throughout, Taft agreed to a Panama Canal with locks and dams, using water from a dammed river to fill a section of the canal to raise boats above sea level and then draining water to lower boats, according to "The Panama Canal: An Army's Enterprise."

When Taft came for the 1911 groundbreaking of the PPIE, he had been involved with the canal commission for years before becoming president in 1909. Taft was not the only politician at the groundbreaking; California Gov. Hiram Johnson, San Francisco Mayor Patrick Henry McCarthy and mayor-elect James "Sunny Jim" Rolph Jr. also attended, along with 100,000 other people, according to the SF Chronicle.

The Panama Canal officially opened on Aug. 15, 1914, just days after U.S. President Woodrow Wilson declared the U.S. neutral (initially) in the European conflict that became World War I. The PPIE celebrating the Panama Canal officially opened on Feb. 20, 1915, and San Francisco Mayor Rolph led a public march to the exposition grounds in the Marina District, according to the essay, "Mayor Rolph and the Panama-Pacific International Exposition," by William Issel and Robert Cherny; planners decided not to have the PPIE spread out across the City, according to PPIE historian Frank Morton Todd.

San Francisco Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin recently compared the PPIE to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) 2023 summit as another international event hosted by San Francisco after suffering through the COVID-19 pandemic in a SF Chronicle article by J.D. Morris published Sept. 20.

After Taft lost the 1912 presidential election, he became a law professor at Yale. Taft was appointed chief justice of the Supreme Court by President William Harding in 1921 before Taft resigned in 1930 due to heart trouble, according to "The Bully Pulpit."

The Philippines became independent from the U.S. in 1946.

In 1977, the U.S. and Panama signed two treaties to transfer control of the Panama Canal and surrounding area to Panama.

The Panama Canal handles about 5% of seaborne trade, though recent drought conditions have reduced the amount of water available for the canal's locks, lowering the number of ships that can use the canal, according to Peter Eavis writing for the New York Times.

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'PHOTOS OF THE MONTH' ONLINE GALLERY

Photo by Liz Mamorsky. lizland.com.

Photographers are invited to submit three of their best photos for consideration to be published in the "Photos of the Month" gallery on RichmondSunsetNews.com. The website averages 20,000 views per month. Please submit photos as jpegs on or near the 15th of each month. For more information, email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com or call 415-706-6428.

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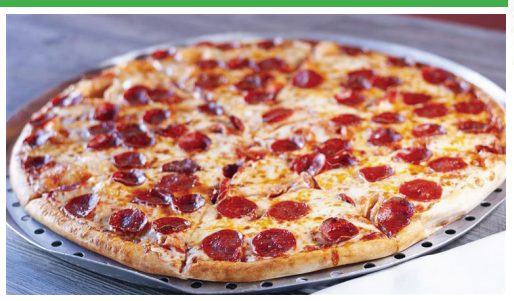

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Sunset Resident Jessie Fairbanks Stars as Lead Programmer for SF Film Festivals

By Noma Faingold

Jessie Fairbanks, director of programming for SFFILM, swiftly entered the Laureate Bar and Lounge at the Laurel Inn on opening night of the mini-festival, Doc Stories (Nov. 2-5), wearing a modern and professional outfit (black jeans, black crew-neck sweater over an orange blouse with an exaggerated Peter Pan collar and low-heeled black slides).

The flexible separates allowed her to stand for long periods of time, pivot to greet people, kneel on the floor, pose for photos and sit on stage under a spotlight moderating post-screening Q-and-A sessions in front an audience.

She needed that day-to-night look to work. She had just played host to an afternoon community screening of, "Little Richard: I Am Everything," featuring director Lisa Cortés as a special guest. Fairbanks seemed to know everyone in the crowded, L-shaped room.

She mingled with filmmakers, board members, longtime SFFILM supporters and media, trying to engage in conversations with a touch of substance, in spite of the distracting electronica music in the background, being surrounded by general chatter, absorbing what publicists whisper in her ear and discreetly reading text notifications every few seconds.

Suddenly, Fairbanks blurted out, "I'm going to get some water."

Fairbanks, 40, who lives in the Sunset District with her husband and two dogs, has headed the SFFILM programming department for three years, including being the lead programmer for the annual San Francisco International Film Festival, which is scheduled for next year, April 25-May 5.

SFFILM executive director, Anne Lai, stood on a small ottoman and welcomed the group at the reception. She announced that it was time to walk one block to the Vogue Theatre for the opening-night screening of "American Symphony," a moving documentary about musician/composer Jon Batiste and everything he went through, personally and professionally, while creating his first symphony. (The doc is currently steaming on Netflix.)

Fairbanks took a few official photos in front of a step-and-repeat banner with "American Symphony" director Matthew Heineman and producer Lauren Domino. Lai and Fairbanks had a quick huddle before walking to the venue.

"I wear a lot of hats and I try to be fully present and available to all needs," said Fairbanks. "We work very hard at seeking a balance of the needs of the audience and the needs of the filmmaker."

Anne Lai (left), executive director of SFFILM, and Director of Programming Jessie Fairbanks pose for photographers on Nov. 2 at the opening night reception of Doc Stories at Laureate Bar and Lounge before the screening of "American Symphony." *Photo by Noma Faingold.*

Fairbanks, who has programmed several of Heineman's documentaries in her career, was more than ready to introduce the film.

"I am definitely amped right now because it's opening night. We've been going for 24 hours now," she said.

When Fairbanks saw an earlier cut of "American Symphony" in August, she decided it had to be the opening night film for Doc Stories, in its ninth year. Heineman told her in the morning that he had just made a new edit and wanted to show the latest version. Typically, Fairbanks would go to dinner with the filmmakers during the screening, but she wanted to see the film for the third time to be better prepared for the post-film Q&A.

"Everyone on the team just wants to get things right so that everyone has a great time," she said. "I want to do right by the filmmakers, who have been generous to give us their films."

At the sold-out screening, Lai introduced Fairbanks as the person "who makes it all happen."

Fairbanks smiled and said, "Anne actually makes this all happen. Let's be honest."

One goal of the organization in shaping Doc Stories is to bring more attention to films that might otherwise be under the radar, just in time for award season. The Bay Area has a supportive documentary community and a large contingent of Academy Award voters. Fairbanks had a background producing documentaries before she switched to the curatorial side of film.

According to Lai, Fairbanks is "incredibly tenacious and has a voracious appetite for chasing after things. What I trust about her is, she doesn't settle for looking at a corner of an arena. She looks at everything in terms of all kinds of work and the kinds of backgrounds."

Before the film started, Fairbanks introduced Heineman as "a journalist in the truest sense and a consistent pursuer of truth. He leads with his heart, and he actually listens."

Following the screening, Fairbanks brought Domino and Emmy Award-winning, Oscar-nominated Heineman on stage for the Q&A, one of her favorite things to do.

"I am not afraid of speaking in public," she said. "I am interested in hearing what the filmmakers have to say and about their process. My job in being a good moderator is letting a conversation unfold. Filmmakers love to talk about their work and what we learn can be unexpected."

Fairbanks steered the conversation toward how Heineman captured intimate, often painful moments of Batiste and his wife, musician/author Suleika Jaouad, who was undergoing cancer treatment while Batiste was reaching career heights.

"Everyone who made this film embraced the commitment to doing it," Heineman said. "It wasn't easy for them. We were shooting 16-18 hours a day, seven days a week for basically a month. Jon, Suleika and I share this idea that magic exists behind every door and we're trying to open it. That's a really fun way to live life. That sort of dance of not knowing what's going to happen but being willing to open that door and seeing what's there. It's important to make films that way."

Before turning questions over to the audience, Fairbanks said, "The vulnerability in front of and behind the camera was definitely evident."

The closing night film was "Anselm," shot in 3D, about German artist Anselm Kiefer and directed by German director Wim Wenders. Fairbanks introduced the film, letting the audience know that Wenders was planning to be at the screening but was unable to attend, following doctor's orders. The director sent a video message instead.

Fairbanks concluded her public duties at Doc Stories by thanking the filmgoers, peppered with a bit of advocacy.

"Theaters need audiences," she said. "Filmmakers and films need spectators. It's so important that people show up and bear witness to art. When we are all together as a community, we are reminded of what connects us, more than what divides us."

Body Found in Golden Gate Park

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spiracy.

A Ramey warrant is a type of arrest warrant issued before the district attorney's office has filed formal charges. Typically, the DA's office obtains a warrant; but a Ramey warrant is obtained by the police department. Ramey warrants are relatively rare.

On Nov. 21, Randy Quezada, the spokesman for SF District Attorney Brooke Jenkins, stated that the charges have been discharged for now.

"The charges against two suspects arrested for unlawful disposal of human remains (Health and Safety Code 7054(a)(1)) and conspiracy for the same (Penal Code 182(a)) by the SFPD in connection to a suspicious death in the Richmond District were discharged on Nov. 7, 2023, pending further investigation on the homicide case,"

"Although the charges against the two suspects have been discharged at this time," Quezada stated. "The investigation is continuing, and charges could be filed at a later date. The District Attorney's Office is committed to fair and ethical prosecutions which require all cases that we charge to be provable beyond a reasonable doubt to a jury.

"Cases presented to the district attorney's office for prosecution are carefully assessed to ensure that there is enough evidence to prove that the suspects are guilty beyond a reasonable doubt," he stated. "Additionally, proceeding on these charges alone in this case now could jeopardize a prosecution for murder later."

Moriarty did not answer a request for comment Nov. 21 and another Nov. 29 as to why Madden is in custody; while Beckhusen's name does not show up in the sheriff's department custody lookup, Madden's does. His next hearing is Dec. 7 at the Hall of Justice and he is charged with criminal threats, stalking, allegation of offense on bail or O.R., arson causing great bodily injury, three unlisted felonies, second-degree robbery, possession or manufacture of combustible material or incendiary device, arson of property of another and threatening a public officer.

SFPD officer Gonee Sepulveda said: "Unfortunately, I cannot confirm the custody status." Subsequently, Tara Moriarty of the Sheriff's Department confirmed that Madden is in custody, but she could not find Beckhusen.

Moriarty did not immediately return a request for comment Nov. 21 as to why Madden is in custody; neither show up on the Sheriff's Department's online tool to look up people in San Francisco jails.

The case remains open and active. Quezada asked anyone with knowledge of the situation to contact the SFPD with information at the SFPD 24-hour tip line at 415-575-4444 or Text a Tip to TIP411 and begin the text message with SFPD. Tipsters may remain anonymous.

The Sunset Beacon editorial staff is always looking for great writers. If you would like to contribute to your community newspaper, email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Real Estate

John M. Lee

2023 R.E. Market Review

As 2023 comes to an end, we have had an interesting year in the real estate market. The question being asked at the end of the year always is: "Where is the real estate market headed?"

The end of this last up-cycle in real estate finally ended last year, which started the downward trend that continued this year with higher inflation rates and rising interest rates causing even slower sales. With COVID-19 mostly under control, the focus turned to issues such as crime, homelessness, affordable housing, inflation and how to make the City better. Following is a short recap of what happened in our local San Francisco 2023 market.

The market started the year slow with the holiday carryover from 2022 and remained that way throughout the year. Sellers trying to sell were disappointed by the market reaction to their properties. If the home was all fixed up, in a desirable location, and at an attractive price, sellers were still able to get good prices as there are still buyers around. However, if there were some defects, the property might sit on the market for some time and sell at a discounted price. Then, as interest rates steadily increased during the year, sales slowed and prices dropped further.

The mortgage interest rates were in the 6-8% range throughout the year, coming down to about 7.5% at the end. The good news is that the latest numbers show the inflation rate moderating, and the Feds signaled that they might be done with raising rates. That resulted in a significant decrease in interest rates right before the end of the year. Economists are predicting that we might see rates in the 6-7% range next year. But just remember, recessions always follow periods of inflation. I believe that we are already in a recession, but it will not be confirmed until the data is in and the economists have a chance to weigh in on it.

Our preliminary numbers are showing that our sales in San Francisco will be down about 28% and prices down about 8% from 2022. I will do a more thorough analysis of our local Richmond and Sunset districts next month.

What does this mean? Will this downward trend continue? Will prices continue to drop?

The readers of my columns know that our market bottomed out in 2009 and we have been in a strong recovery mode ever since, resulting in large double-digit appreciation from 2012-15. The next few years came with a slower or normal rate of appreciation.

In 2020, COVID-19 hit the market and we had a stoppage in the market for a couple of months before sales came roaring back strong with people reconsidering their long-term housing situation and taking advantage of low interest rates. Our market here on the west side did very well as the trend of moving from high density to low density locations was evident throughout and created much demand in the Richmond and Sunset districts. Prices increased here more than other parts of the City.

In 2022, the down cycle started, then continued in 2023. Inflation was still high, and the Feds kept raising interest rates to try and keep it under control. They raised it a total of 1% in four separate increases. With each increase, mortgage rates rose accordingly.

While movement of long-term mortgage rates track closer to the 10-year treasury yields, the fed funds rate is one component that can affect it. Mortgage rates are more complicated, but the last couple of years they followed the fed fund increases pretty closely.

So, where is the market heading in 2024? I believe that we began our down leg in this real estate cycle about a year ago. Normally it is about seven years up and three to four years down and flat before we recover. We are currently back to about 2018-2019 prices. I expect prices will continue to slide in 2024 and hopefully bottom sometime during the year. I do not believe that our economy is as bad as in 2008-10 during the financial crisis years, so I am not looking for that type of crash to our real estate market.

Sunset Homes Sold in November*

Address	Bed	Bath	Sq. Ft.	Price
1730 22nd Ave.	3	1	1,390	$1,030,000
2382 30th Ave.	2	1	1,049	1,175,000
1919 21st Ave.	2	1	1,125	1,205,000
2466 38th Ave.	3	1	1,190	1,300,000
1731 26th Ave.	2	1.5	1,265	1,482,000
2562 35th Ave.	3	2	1,790	1,510,000
1639 17th Ave.	3	2	1,954	1,560,000
347 Quintara St.	5	3	1,950	1,610,000
2467 15th Ave.	4	3	2,184	1,650,000
101 Quintara St.	5	3.5	2,610	1,950,000
2046 48th Ave.	3	2.5	2,030	2,040,000
1224 16th Ave.	4	2.5	2,919	2,100,000
1680 18th Ave.	3	3.5	2,635	2,880,000

*Partial listing. Source: M.L.S.

Next year also is a presidential election year where President Joe Biden will do everything within his power to bring the interest rate down and the economy up before November. Locally, it will be a big election year with the mayor facing at least two major opponents and all the odd-numbered districts' supervisors are up for election. All of the politicians will do what they can to present a bright picture for our country and for San Francisco.

We are fortunate in San Francisco that, despite the problems we have, we are still a desirable place to live and there are still buyers purchasing. So, if you are a seller, though the prices are lower now, you can still sell the property at the right price. If you are a buyer, I would recommend proceeding with caution as large price appreciation will not be back for a few years but there are opportunities out there. If you are a real estate investor, now might be a good time to pick up properties that you could not have afforded the last few years.

I enjoyed speaking and exchanging emails with you this past year. Many of you had some great questions and insights about our market and the Richmond and Sunset districts. I wish you a safe holiday season and a prosperous 2024!

John M. Lee is a broker with Compass specializing in the Richmond and Sunset districts. If you have any real estate questions, call him at 415-465-0505 or email at johnlee@isellsf.com. Find an archive of his columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

'Rob Raven'

Continued from page 1

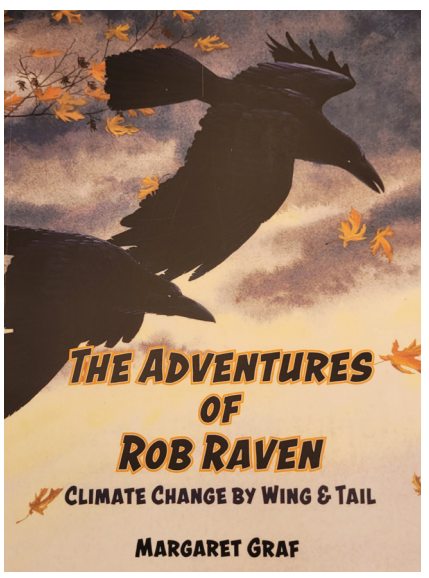
experiences of a bird," Graf said. "So, the fictional character of Rob Raven was born.

"Rob's stories and adventures became an instant success, with discussions, reports of sightings, and even a lunch with the newly famous raven," she said. "When one of my readers reported reading his adventures to her 7-year-old grandson, I knew I had an intergenerational vehicle that had appeal to all years, followed by a desire (like Rob) to spread the word on this important topic."

"The Adventures of Rob Raven: Climate Change by Wing & Tail" is written for elementary- and early-middle-school-age students and their grandparents, parents and other adults who care for them. It is a book designed to be treasured before or after a walk on the beach, preferably Ocean Beach, where the story is centered.

Each of the 12 short chapters conclude with suggestions for "doable" activities that young children can handle with adult supervision. The suggested activities are focused on actions that will make life more sustainable for animals and humans – like recipes for homemade suet cakes for birds, participating in a beach clean-up, keeping a wildlife journal, learning to read a tide table, growing a pollinator garden without pesticides, and so on.

It was important to Graf that Rob Raven and his partner Rosie be older, like the neighbors who attend Senior Power.



Copies of "The Adventures of Rob Raven" are available at Black Bird Bookstore.

"Their feathers are getting a little sparse in some areas," she explained. "Their eyesight isn't what it was."

One passage reads: "Some mornings," Rob admits, "I can hardly get a croak out." But that doesn't mean they – like all of us at whatever age – have nothing to contribute.

The book starts when climate change forces Rob to leave his old home in Asphaltland, where rising heat dried up their water hole and reliable building materials were getting sparse. Hitching a ride on the Pelican Express, he heads north where he has heard that humans are more concerned about conservation.

The flight takes Rob over land devastated by high heat, forest fires and receding river banks. Climate woes, he realized, are not limited to Asphaltland.

"Humans are back to their old tricks, taking nature for granted, ruining it with garbage and pollution, and having no plan … at least not one that includes wildlife sustainability," according to the book. "Ravens will do their bit, but they can't do it all." Humans must help, they must "wake up before we all face total destruction and extinction."

Eventually, Rob and his companions reach Ocean Beach in "Frankville," where the weather is not as hot, the tide brings all sorts of goodies, and colonies of snowy plovers, seagulls and earlier-arriving ravens promise community. While the land must be shared with coyotes, hawks, raccoons and negligent humans, life on Ocean Beach is basically good. So good, in fact, that under the leadership of Rob and his partner Rosie, the birds on the beach plan a celebration.

When one of Rob's raven friends goes missing, the party is almost scuttled, but thankfully, a kindly older human Rob has taken to accompanying on walks, is there to help. And all works out well.

"The Adventures of Rob Raven: Climate Change by Wing & Tail" is available at Black Bird Bookstore at 4541 Irving St. Graf will conduct a reading and autograph her book at Far Out Gallery on Saturday, Dec. 16 at 2 p.m. The book is also available through Amazon.com. Proceeds from these events will go to the Community Living Campaign, a local non-profit that serves seniors and people with disabilities.

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Lowell High School's Admission Policy Again Being Reviewed by SFUSD

By Thomas K. Pendergast

Once again, the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) Board of Education is contemplating ending the "merit-based" admissions policy at Lowell High School, replacing it instead with the lottery system used by most high schools in the district.

A high school task force was set up after a resolution was passed in June 2022 and it began meeting in November of that year to look at ways to improve all the district's high schools. One task force recommendation – changing Lowell admissions policy – has once again created a backlash.

In its final report, the task force recommended changes to the school's admissions policy that align with one of two approaches:

1. Admit students to Lowell by lottery among those interested in attending.

2. Admit students to Lowell based on revised academic criteria (i.e., a minimum grade point average) … and invest in outreach to students who qualify. Maintain priority for students attending middle schools that historically send fewer students to Lowell.

The current "merit-based" system relies on a qualifying test, special application and essay, and reserves spots for students from underrepresented middle schools or those with minimum academic criteria and strong recommendations from middle school staff.

In a recent interview with Jill Tucker of the San Francisco Chronicle, Superintendent Dr. Matt Wayne stated that switching to a minimum 3.0 GPA would create a diverse group of students and would meet the criteria for admissions, ideally increasing the overall diversity at the school, which is now disproportionately white and Asian American.

At this point, the matter is up for discussion. No action has been taken by the school board. No changes to the admissions policy at Lowell or any other school would take place for the fall of 2024 and full implementation of a plan would likely take until June of 2027.

Demonstrators opposed to changing Lowell High School's "merit-based" admission policy to a lottery system stood in front of the district headquarters on Franklin Street chanting "SFUSD, do your job!" before the school board meeting on Nov. 14. *Photo by Thomas K. Pendergast.*

The "merit-based" admissions to Lowell were set aside during the pandemic in 2020 because schools were shut down and the disruption meant that all the usual qualifiers were suddenly nonexistent or inadequate.

In June of 2022, the same month that the school board recommended setting up the task force, it also brought back merit-based admissions with a 4-3 vote.

All four board members who voted to reinstate the merit-based system were appointed by Mayor London Breed, three of them replacing previous board members who were recalled in an election that focused on several decisions by those members, including changing the Lowell admissions policy.

Other actions by the board which fueled the recall included the failed efforts to destroy the Life of George Washington murals at his namesake high school in the Richmond District and the renaming of 44 district schools.

And like these other controversies, the idea of abandoning the merit-based system at Lowell has sparked an acrimonious backlash, especially from members of the Asian-American community.

At a rally in front of district headquarters during a recent school board meeting, Forrest Liu, a self-described "stop Asian-hate activist," called out three members of the current school board, starting with Commissioner Mark Sanchez.

"As a middle school principal, (Sanchez) failed to get one of his students into Lowell. And what did he say? He said, 'Lowell failed,'" Liu said. "Sanchez is a failure, and you cannot blame Lowell."

"(Commissioner Matt Alexander) is a colonizer! He said that merit (based admission) is segregation. Merit is segregation. He is a colonizer!"

"(Board President Kevine Boggess) thinks there are too many Asians in SFUSD. Too many Asians! That is a slippery slope because when an Asian person is attacked on the street, when they are killed, who cares? Because there's too many Asians. Kevin Boggess and the school board are racists. Kevin Boggess is a racist and should resign," he said. "Sanchez is a failure and Alexander is a colonizer. SFUSD, do your job."

In 2021, attorney Christine Linnenbach successfully sued the district for violating the California state open meetings law because the board failed to properly list the resolution on the agenda when it voted to switch to the lottery system, did not provide equal time to both sides during public comment nor give the public adequate time to review the proposal before the vote.

"I'm here to tell the San Francisco Unified School District: 'We sued you before. We're going to sue you again. And we're going to win,'" Linnenbach said at the rally.

"We are tired of spending $500,000 – a hundred thousand dollars a page – for a sham task force, Trojan horse report to push a political agenda," Linnenbach said. "Are we going to let that happen? No! We are not going to let that happen. We're going to save merit.

"We want good schools that educate all students based on their individual performance, not this performative, parochial political agenda," she said.

There is a documented history of race-related incidents at Lowell.

In 2016, about two dozen students walked out in protest after an offensive sign was posted on a window at the school's library, which read "Happy Black History Month #Gang" and showed several hip-hop artists along with President Barack Obama. The students resented the word "Gang" being used in relation to Black History Month.

More recently, in January of 2021, an anti-racism lesson using an online bulletin program called Padlet was smeared by the use of anti-Black and anti-Semitic slurs, along with calling for the death of President Joe Biden.

At the Nov. 14 school board meeting, Sanchez gave his version of Lowell's racist history.

"We have a history of making racist, racially charged decisions in this district," Sanchez said. "And in the '90s, this district had a policy that allowed students to get into Lowell, if you're African American you didn't have to

Continued on page 9

Commentary

Quentin L. Kopp

Sending Judges Out to Pasture

The unreliability of American and San Francisco media today is not new to our country. Neither is the people's right to discard biased, unsound judges.

Thomas Jefferson once declared: "As, for the safety of society, we commit honest maniacs to Bedlam, so judges should be withdrawn from their bench, whose erroneous biases are leading us to dissolution. It may indeed injure them in fame or in fortune; but it saves the republic, which is the first and supreme law." So, too, may we commit two San Francisco Superior Court judges to a pasture with other lawyers on March 5, 2024, the primary election.

One candidate for such non-judicial pasture is Patrick Thompson at the Hall of Justice. He could be described as a "revolving door" who released defendant drug dealers without bail despite a history of their repeated drug-dealing convictions.

Deputy District Attorney Jean Myungjin Roland, a veteran prosecutor for more than 22 years, is running against Thompson. Ms. Roland was born in South Korea and emigrated to the United States at the age of 1, brought by her parents who spoke no English but learned English at night leaving Ms. Roland and her sibling with willing neighbors. With persistent hard work, her parents bought a home in the Sunset and owned small retail stores in the Richmond, Japantown and Union Square. Jean Roland attended West Portal Lutheran School, Lowell High School, UC Berkeley and Boston University Law School. On weekends, after school and during summers, she worked in those small luggage and gift stores. Ms. Roland and her husband are raising two children who now attend St. Ignatius High School and St. Cecilia School, respectively. She is now managing attorney of the General Felony Trial Unit and is, manifestly, extremely well qualified for the Superior Court. I'm proud to endorse and recommend her to voters.

Challenging another "revolving door" judge is Chip Zecher, another experienced trial attorney from the Sunset District, who was appointed in 2019 by Gov. Gavin Newson to the governing board of the University of California Law San Francisco (formerly Hasting College of Law). He is now vice chairman of such board. He began his legal career as a research attorney at the San Francisco Superior Court, then opened his own law office as a trial attorney with cases in the nine Bay Area Counties. Mr. Zecher was also chosen by then-Mayor Gavin Newsom to serve in 2003 on his mayoral transition committee.

Zecher will run against Michael Megert on March 5, 2024, another jurist averse to decisions protecting public safety. He currently is at the Community Justice Center, 575 Polk St., a non-trial appendage of our Superior Court and hardly a fulcrum of contested criminal law litigations. Chip Zecher is clearly the citizenry choice for Superior Court.

But wait: The fearless Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin and two of his "progressive" colleagues, Walton and Chan, immediately introduced last month, after Roland and Zecher filed their candidacy forms, a resolution decrying the nerve of the aforementioned excellent trial lawyers in running against the "revolving door" incumbents. The five-page resolution condemns those who demonstrate the "chutzpah" of running for judge, as if such legal miscreants lack qualification, independence and impartiality. In their view, it's un-American to challenge such judges at a legally required election!

I remind stupidvisors Peskin, Walton and Chan that California law authorizes qualified attorneys to contest any judge's election. Perhaps the most stimulating instance of that occurred in 1985 when then-Chief Justice Rose Elizabeth Bird and justices Cruz Reynoso and Joseph Grodin were denied election to another California Supreme Court term by California voters outraged at their failure to uphold trial court sentences in criminal cases, including the death penalty for murderers. (About 67% of the voters threw them out of office!) Will history repeat itself on a smaller scale? I obviously hope so and hope you do, too.

The aforementioned Peskin, Walton, Chan resolution was referred to the Government Audit and Oversight Committee, composed of supervisors Peskin, Chan and Catherine Stefani. At press time, no date, time or room of that committee hearing on the resolution had been published, so stay tuned on those free-speech mavens.

Meanwhile, Chanukah begins at sundown Dec. 7, and ends seven nights later while Christmas occurs on Monday, Dec. 25. I plan to spend New Year's Day at the Rose Parade, then the Rose Bowl. I convey warm best wishes for a happy Chanukah, merry Christmas and happy, healthy New Year to all of you faithful readers.

A teacher said to a student: "It's clear you haven't studied your geography. Why not?" "Well," the student replied, "my dad says the world is changing every day, so I decided to wait until it settles down." Be of good cheer in the new year!

Quentin Kopp is a former San Francisco supervisor, state senator, SF Ethics Commission member, president of the California High Speed Rail Authority governing board and retired Superior Court judge.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ARTIST SEEKS STUDIO SPACE

Artist looking to rent a studio in the Richmond or Sunset district. Have carpentry skills if you're looking to lease space needing repair. Contact Jeff at 415-572-9482 or jeffpetersen@gmail.com.

ANNUAL HOLIDAY MARKET

Support local artisans and St. Francis Episcopal Church at 399 San Fernando Way on Saturday Nov. 11, 10-7 p.m. and Sunday Nov. 12, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

COMMENTARIES AND LETTERS

From the editor: All commentaries we publish are the opinions of the writers and should not be considered our editorial stance on issues. We strive to remain neutral and offer a balance of viewpoints. We invite readers who wish to express their opinions to send a letter to the editor to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Word limit for the newspaper is 350, for the website, 500. RichmondSunsetNews.com.

FELTON TECH SQUAD

Felton's Tech Squad is providing free basic tech support for older adults and people with disabilities. Ask questions regarding how to navigate your smartphone, tablet or laptop. One-on-one session in English. Friday, Dec. 15, 1:30-3 p.m. at the Ortega Library (3223 Ortega St.) Drop-in for one-on-one session in English. For more information, call 415-474-1558 or email techsquad@felton.org.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy December birthday to Arya, Jarrod B., Livvy and Saffy Basey, Jen Berman, Arlene Bradlyn, Derrick Carvajal, Ryan 'Puddin Pants' Chan, Helen Curran, Luca "The Bazooka" Dermu, Aaron Ding, Nico Eshel, Justine Fields, Sima Grabovsky, Mackenzie Huynh, Maria Jesue, Paul Kozakiewicz, Suzanne Leigh, Shannon "Spilly" Magnin, Dave Mana, Brittany Markert, Bryan Marsh, Leland Monagle, Laurie Rittman, Reid Russell, Shay Sosa, Millie Young, David Wang, Athena Weber and David Wong. *To add a name to the monthly birthday list, email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Free.*

HOLIDAY ON TARAVAL STREET

People of Parkside/Sunset (POPS) presents "Holiday on Taraval Street" between 21st and 24th avenues. Outdoor merchant displays, food, refreshments, games, treats and a visit by Santa. Take part in the annual tree-lighting ceremony at McCoppin Square – bring an ornament to hang on the tree. Dec. 10, 2-7:30 p.m. To learn more, email info@sf-pops.com.

OUTER SUNSET FARMERS MARKET AND MERCANTILE

Join us every Sunday at the Outer Sunset Farmers Market and Mercantile, where you can find fresh produce from local farmers and ranchers, enjoy delicious dishes from Outer Sunset eateries and discover unique finds from local makers and artisans. Every Sunday, find a revolving series of live performers, engaging activities and exhibitions at the ArtShip and fun zone! Our farmers market accepts WIC, EBT and Market Match! 37th Avenue at Ortega Street, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Go to sunsetmercantilesf.com or call 415-465-2475 for more details.

OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE

Office Space on Geary, next door to Tigges Jewelers and Clock Repairs (since 1932) between 22nd and 23rd avenues, will be available for occupancy Jan. 1, 2024. The space is semi-furnished. Rent is $400/month and included utilities. To see the space, contact Rudy at Vance Economic Services at 415-387-7417.

ONLINE-ONLY CONTENT

Visit our website, to find features that you can't find in the newspaper. Look for "Cooking Together," by Shanta Nimbark Sacharoff, "Overtures and Undertows," a column by Noma Faingold, a talented writer and longtime contributor to the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers. Business features include, "Business Profile" by John Oppenheimer and "A Shot of Salvation" by Deno Gellepes. Check out the recent "Photos of the Month" gallery. RichmondSunsetNews.com.

"PHOTOS OF THE MONTH" ONLINE GALLERY

Photographers are invited to submit three of their best photos for consideration to be published in the "Photos of the Month" gallery on RichmondSunsetNews.com. The website averages more than 20,000 views per month. Please submit photos as jpegs by the 15th of the month. For more information, email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com or call 415-706-6428.

PLANT SWAP AT SUNSET BRANCH LIBRARY

Bring a plant, take a plant, bring your seedlings, divisions or cuttings to swap with other gardeners. All types of plants are welcome – succulents, house plants, flowers, ground covers or wild grasses. Bring cuttings, starts, bulbs or full-sized plants. Please label your plants prior to bringing them to the swap! Sunset Branch Library, 1305 18th Ave., Saturday, Jan. 6, 2024, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

REFUSE REFUSE CLEANUPS

Cleanups in the Sunset District:

Sunday, Dec. 10, 1–3 p.m., Great Highway Park Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/448138/.

Wednesday, Dec. 13, 4–5 p.m., Sunset Happy Hour Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/581814/.

Saturday, Dec. 16, 10 a.m.–noon, Central Sunset Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/546732/.

Saturday, Dec. 23, 10 a.m.–noon, Inner Sunset Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/464169/.

SECONDHAND SATURDAYS

Come check out Secondhand Saturdays and celebrate all things vintage, antique and secondhand. Presented by Sunset Mercantile every third Saturday of the month at Ortega Street and 37th Avenue, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Shop local from more than 50 vintage vendors, makers and artisans that are some of the Bay Area's best. Enjoy live music, family friendly activities, food trucks, rotating monthly features and more! Visit sunsetmercantilesf.com/secondhand/ for more information.

SENIOR NEEDS A HOME

Senior lady, quiet, with references, needs a place to live at a private residence in the west area of San Francisco. Having arthiritis, she avoids flights of steps and hills. Uses public transportation. Call 415-561-9275 if you or someone you know can provide her a home.

STAMP COLLECTOR AND STAMP COLLECTIONS

Stamp collector is buying stamps and stamp collections. I am buying "older stamps" from the 1800s to 1930. American Philatelic Society member since 1986. Pictures are appreciated. Call or text message 415-533-0761.

THANK YOU!

Sincere thanks to the Sunset Beacon readers who generously donated to the Nourish Your Neighborhood Newspaper campaign. Your contribution helped keep us financially healthy. If you donated before we started our Patreon campaign and would like some of our Sunset Beacon branded products (tote bag, pens, coffee mug, hat or shirt), please send an email to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. We would also like to share just your name in the paper to thank you. Please let us know if that is OK. To donate, please visit our website to sign up for our Patreon campaign, send a check to: Sunset Beacon, P.O. Box 16035, SF, CA, 94116 or send via PayPal to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Thank you!

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Announcements: $1 per word, 20-word minimum. Share birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, births, obituaries, graduations, sports highlights, business accomplishments, retirements, college admissions, etc.

FREE: Add a name to the monthly birthday list or submit free community events at no charge. FREE: There is no charge for occasional announcements for small businesses celebrating an anniversary or other significant milestone or event. Send announcement to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Announcements will run in the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers (36,000 copies) and on RichmondSunsetNews.com (more than 20,000 views per month). Ads must be pre-paid. Deadline: 20th of the month. Mail check to: P.O. Box 16035, S.F., CA 94116. Call 415-706-6428 or email editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com for more details.

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Happy Holidays!

Assembly

Assemblymember Phil Ting

New Year, New Laws

It's almost time to ring in the new year! As 2023 comes to a close, I want to let you know of about a few state laws I championed that are taking effect on Jan. 1.

At the top of the list is one that will be affecting the families in California by cleaning up the air that children riding school buses are breathing. Assemby Bill-579 requires all new school bus purchases after 2035 to be zero emission. According to the California Air Resources Board, a child who rides the bus to and from school accounts for 33% of that child's daily exposure to toxic air pollutants. A consistent statewide planning goal to obtain zero-emission buses is critical to improving air quality and student health outcomes, especially in communities already disproportionately impacted by severe air pollution.

Another bill that affects many in my district is AB-449, which requires law enforcement agencies to adopt a hate-crimes policy and follow specific guidelines when responding to incidents. We have seen cases and victims treated differently from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. A hate-crime victim should consistently be treated with respect and dignity no matter if the crime was committed in San Francisco or Oakland.

Differences of opinion on religion, war, or even wearing a mask has spurred debate that has sometimes turned hostile. What does this mean for our diverse communities? We saw a massive spike in hate crimes against the AAPI community. Stop AAPI Hate has collected more than 10,900 reports to its website. Thankfully, while we have seen a decline in AAPI hate crimes and incidents, other communities continue to suffer from hate violence:

- Overall, reported hate crime events in California increased 20.2%, from 1,763 in 2021 to 2,120 in 2022.
- Hate crimes against Black people remain the most prevalent and increased 27.1% from 513 in 2021 to 652 in 2022.
- Reported hate crime events involving a sexual orientation bias increased, rising 29% from 303 in 2021 to 391 in 2022.

It is my hope with the passage of laws such as AB-449 and providing awareness about resources, such as the hate crime reporting hotline and website at the California Civil Rights Department, we can spread the message that hate is not OK and that there is support available for those who need it.

Also starting next year, consumers will get more information about the cookware they are using and purchasing. AB-1200 requires manufacturers to label their cookware if it contains Per- and Polyflouroalkyl chemicals (PFAS). It was passed in 2021, but companies were given until 2024 to comply with the labeling component of the bill.

It has been determined that PFAS is a class of roughly 9,000 man-made chemicals linked to health problems, including cancer, hormone disruption, thyroid disease and vaccine interference. When PFAS come into contact with food, people ingest them. With AB-1200, consumers can make a choice on whether or not they want their food to be in contact with these harmful chemicals.

This coming year will be my last in the Assembly. It has been an absolute honor serving as your assemblymember and I will continue to prioritize making California a better state for everyone until my term is over. I hope you and your family have a wonderful holiday season and a great 2024.

Phil Ting represents the 19th Assembly District, which includes the west side of San Francisco along with the communities of Broadmoor, Colma and Daly City as well as part of South San Francisco. Find an archive of his columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Light Show

Continued from page 1

tract partner" will work to create "an iconic garden experience and memorable winter destination for San Francisco, the Bay Area and beyond. The contract partner will create an evening garden experience, illuminating existing plants and built elements along paved trails throughout the Garden. The responsive contract partner will collaboratively engage the Recreation and Park Department and the Gardens in the program design, and lead the installation, deinstallation and maintenance of the light activation through the run of the show."

Negotiations with the contract partner will begin after GGGP finalizes the selection. Upon successful agreement to all terms of the contract, the potential partner's proposal will be reviewed by the GGGP board of directors for approval, according to the RFP. If they determine that negotiations are not proceeding satisfactorily due to the fault of the selected respondent, GGGP may commence negotiations with another respondent or begin the selection process anew.

But several local environmentalists are crying foul over the impact that winter lighting may have on birds, plants and other wildlife using the space.

"Artificial lights do impact the timing of not just animals but plants," said Whitney Grover, deputy director for the Golden Gate Bird Alliance. "The timing of their blooming, the timing of their loss of leaves and all of their other biological functions (are affected) and then that in turn goes all the way up through the ecosystem.

"Birds are impacted by having the timing of their migration affected, the routes of their migration affected and then the timing of their breeding; and so all of these things can have cumulative impacts on the animals."

A representative of the Gardens of Golden Gate Park sent the above image, explaining, "We are still in the very early stages and don't yet know what a winter lights event at the Gardens would actually look like. So, as included in the request for proposals is this image from Flower Piano at Night at the Botanical Garden as the closest comparable event." *Photo courtesy of Gardens of Golden Gate Park.*

Grover suggested that if GGGP insists on doing this, they do things to minimize the impact.

"The Botanical Garden right now is a wonderful refuge for birds and wildlife from all the rest of the lights of the City," Grover said. "And we know it's just a small little patch in a big city that's very heavily lit, but right now, because the garden closes at night, it's a perfect little refuge for birds and other wildlife to not just be away from light impacts but also be away from humans at night.

"If the Garden is going to proceed with this, we ask that they turn off the lights as early in the evening as possible and keep them off through the rest of the night, only have them on for the opening hours of the exhibit and then turn them off no matter what," he said.

The San Francisco Chapter of Sierra Club member Vicky Hoover is adamantly opposed to the plan.

"Excessive continued nighttime lighting hurts the natural rhythms of many wildlife and interferes with migration and other movements by numerous birds," Hoover said. "And, at this time, shortly after the California state legislature passed (and the governor signed) SB-337, which codifies into law the governor's earlier executive order making 30 by 30 (the goal of conserving 30% of our state's lands and waters by 2030) of which program a significant auxiliary is to give better nature access to underserved urban communities and to enhance urban biodiversity – such extra park-lighting does neither of those things; in fact it sets us back.

"It is apparently a part of the City's increasing efforts to rely on commercial ventures in parks; the world-renowned park that has the mission of bringing nature into the City is becoming little more than a cash cow," Hoover said.

A Nov. 20 letter to the GGGP's president, Sarah Ryan, was made public by San Franciscans for Urban Nature (SFUN), a self-described group of community members who support protecting nature in the City, expressing its disapproval.

"We are very concerned about the new RFP asking for proposals for the installation and operation of additional lighting, including a light show with sound, in either the San Francisco Botanical Garden, the Japanese Tea Garden or the Conservatory of Flowers," the letter stated. "We request that you rescind this RFP."

Among 20 individual concerns about the project listed in the letter were those related to timing and public input.

"The RFP was issued on Oct. 12, and the proposals had to be submitted to the GGGP by Nov. 15. This short timeline gives the public little time to react to this proposal, and in addition, gives respondents little time to come up with well-thought-out proposals, unless they were somehow made aware of the RFP before it was issued," the letter states.

"This proposal has been created within the GGGP Board, but with no notice or hearing before the public. Does the public-private partnership structure of GGGP prevent the public from learning about and commenting in a timely manner on activities that will take place in one of San Francisco's major parks?" SFUN said.

"The RFP states that the proposed projects must make money for the GGGP as well as for the Department of Recreation and Parks. Tickets are projected to cost between $28 and $40 per person. The minimum net revenue generated for the gardens must be at least $500,000. Half of all revenue will go to the Department of Recreation and Parks. At what point will making money overrule habitat protection?"

OutsideLands.org
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COMPASS

Police Blotter

Robbery: Unit Block of Harding Road, Nov. 1, 7:29 a.m.

Park Station officers responded to a report of a robbery.

The victim said they were fishing on a dock when the suspect approached and pointed a firearm at them. The suspect then searched the victim's pockets for valuables and took the victim's cellphone before leaving the area.

Assault: 1200 Block of La Playa Street, Nov. 3, 3:08 p.m.

The victim, an employee, confronted the suspect who was attempting to leave the store with stolen merchandise. The suspect responded by throwing a cup of hot water at the victim, causing burns.

The suspect then fled the area.

Vandalism to Property: 2300 Block of 24th Avenue, Nov. 9, 1:08 p.m.

Officers responded to a nearby unrelated incident and observed a suspect who had entered and vandalized the front office area at Taraval Station the previous day. The officers detained the suspect.

After further investigation, the suspect was arrested.

Battery: Great Highway and Sloat Boulevard, Nov. 10, 4:06 p.m.

The victim said they were walking when the suspect approached them and started speaking gibberish. The victim asked the suspect to repeat what they had said. The suspect responded by throwing water at the victim.

Assault: 3200 Block of 20th Avenue, Dec. 12, 7:09 p.m.

The victim said they were sitting in the passenger seat of an unknown suspect's vehicle when they got into a verbal altercation with the suspect.

The victim was gathering their property to exit the vehicle when the suspect hit the victim and caused a small laceration.

The suspect then left the scene in their vehicle which came in contact with the victim as they drove away.

Discharging a Firearm: 1600 Block of Lincoln Way, Dec. 12, 12:42 a.m.

Officers responded to a report of possible shots being fired and located shell casings in the area. A security video revealed the suspect was riding a scooter and shooting a firearm in the air.

Threats: 2300 Block of 19th Avenue, Dec. 12, 6:30 p.m.

The victim, a store employee, reported the suspect was trying to purchase cigarettes and became angry after being asked for ID. The suspect then brandished a knife and threatened to harm the victim.

Outstanding Warrant: 2300 Block of 24th Avenue, Nov. 13, 4:54 p.m.

The subject entered Taraval Station to file a report but did not have any identification with them.

A computer check, which was necessary to confirm the subject's identity to file the report, revealed an outstanding arrest warrant out of San Mateo.

The subject was arrested.

Burglary, Hot Prowl, Unlawful Entry, Outstanding Warrant Arrest: Frederick and Stanyan Streets, Nov. 16, 1:43 a.m.

A Park Station officer was on patrol when he observed a subject meandering in the vicinity, then suddenly lost sight of the subject.

Believing the subject was engaging in the commission of a crime, the officer exited his vehicle and observed the suspect inside the store located on the 500 block of Frederick Street. Upon arrival of backup officers, the subject was arrested.

Through further investigation, officers located the owner of the laundromat who was inside an office on the premises at the time of the incident. The suspect was charged for hot prowl burglary.

The case was assigned to the Burglary Division.

Breaking Window, Outstanding Warrant: 800 Block of Lincoln Way, Nov. 17, 11:23 p.m.

The victim said they heard a loud noise outside and observed the suspect next to a newly broken window. The suspect then made eye contact with the victim before walking away. Multiple victims and witnesses also reported the suspect had been observed throwing rocks at numerous properties.

The suspect was located. After further investigation, the suspect was arrested.

Brandishing a Weapon, Catalytic Converter Theft: 14th Avenue and Judah Street, Nov. 18, 5:28 a.m.

The victim was driving and observed the suspects stealing a catalytic converter.

As the victim came closer, one of the suspects held up a gun and gestured for the victim to keep driving.

Assault: 400 Block of Judah Street, Nov. 20, 2:01 p.m.

The victim, a Muni driver, said they had been sitting on a bench when the suspect walked up and struck the victim's leg with a sharp object. The suspect then walked away.

Shoplifting with Force: 1500 Block of Sloat Boulevard, Nov. 21, 5:52 p.m.

Store employees reported the security alarm had gone off and alerted them someone was exiting the store without paying for merchandise.

A witness said the suspect was observed pushing a filled shopping cart out of the store.

While attempting to flee the area, the suspect rammed the cart into a nearby vehicle that was passing by.

The suspect then took the merchandise out of the cart, attempted to hit the employees who were trying to detain the suspect and fled the area.

Responding officers located the suspect. After further investigation, the suspect was arrested.

Robbery: 2100 Block of 24th Avenue, Nov. 30, 2:17 p.m.

Two suspects brandished a knife and ordered the victims to give them their belongings before punching the victims and fleeing with the stolen property.

From the Editor

Michael Durand

I had a lot to be thankful for this past Thanksgiving. Not the least of which was suviving a massive heart attack on Oct. 18!

I wrote all about my ordeal in an online-only version of "From the Editor." If you'd like to know the details, go to RichmondSunsetNews.com to read about my near-death experience.

The bottom line is, the amazing medical professionals at Kaiser Permanente saved my life. They told me if I hadn't gone to the emergency room that afternoon, I would not have been alive the next morning.

I will be forever grateful to the impressively skillful doctors, nurses and medical staff. Thanks to them, I'm feeling much better and I'm back at my desk creating new editions of our beloved neighborhood newspapers.

It's time to make a special mention of thanks to Paul Kozakiewicz, the previous editor and publisher – and the founder – of the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers. While I was confined to a bed with tubes and wires and oxygen and all manner of medical devices, Paul stepped up and took over for me. He is responsible for meeting the deadlines for the November issues. He really went above and beyond to keep the presses rolling and I am grateful beyond words.

The papers are Paul's "babies." He started them three decades ago and pushed out every issue for 30 years until I took over about five years ago. He still helps proofread and copy edit the issues every month and I consider myself to be very fortunate to "co-parent" the papers with him.

Even More Sincere Thanks

On Thanksgiving I posted on our Facebook page (SF Richmond Review) how much I appreciate everyone in this newspaper's orbit: "Happy Thanksgiving! We warmly appreciate our advertisers, Patreon supporters, donors, writers, photographers, columnists, contributors, cartoonists, editors, printers, delivery crew, the businesses and organizations that help distribute the papers and, of course, our loyal readers. We love our community and are very thankful to live and work on San Francisco's west side. Love and good health to all."

All true and sincere.

I also want to thank the many friends who kindly sent words of concern and care regarding my medical adventures. I even heard from people I've never met wishing me good health and a full recovery. Please know that every one of your messages were like little bandaids on my damaged heart. I am very grateful to our community for all the good people out there who truly love and care for one another.

You may notice that we tend toward publising stories about the good parts of our lives out here near the Pacific. We are proud of our neighborhood and work to support our community as much as we can. I am happy to play a small role in spreading the love.

Warm wishes for a happy, healthy holiday season!

Michael Durand is the editor and publisher of the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers and the RichmondSunsetNews.com website. He can be reached at Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Lowell

Continued from page 6

score as high as a white or Asian student. If you're a Latino, same thing.

"Families filed a class-action lawsuit against the district based on that policy and they won. The district lost," he said. "And so then the district was forced to come up with another policy."

In 2001 the district adopted the merit-based policy for Lowell, formerly known as the "three-bands" system. This was around the same time Sanchez was first elected to the school board.

"It did not provide the diversity that we had sought," Sanchez said. "And so, it's been a sticking point for me. I taught in the district for years. I was a principal in the district for years. Part of the system of the bands was to provide every middle school with a Lowell committee that would try to get kids access into Lowell.

"When I became principal at Horace Mann (middle school), that committee didn't exist. In my two years as principal at Horace Mann in the Mission District, not one of our students got into Lowell because we didn't have that committee. Nor did we have the bandwidth or the wherewithal to get that committee going."

Additionally, the merit-based policy might be illegal under California state law. Sanchez said he's still "uncomfortable" with using GPA to determine entrance into Lowell.

"I still think that breaks the law. I think that does not comport with the state law, which says that comprehensive high schools cannot use academic requirements or athletic requirements for entrance."

The California Education Code 35160.5 says schools must ensure "that selection of pupils to enroll in the school is made through a random, unbiased process that prohibits an evaluation of whether a pupil should be enrolled based upon the pupil's academic or athletic performance."

Yet that same code section says school districts "may employ existing entrance criteria for specialized schools or programs if the criteria are uniformly applied to all applicants."

The district does not officially consider Lowell a "specialized" school, but rather a "comprehensive" school. However, if there is a lawsuit against the current admissions policy, it might be argued that because of its emphasis on stringent higher academic standards, the school is very much specialized.

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Supervisor Joel Engardio

Leading With Joy

For Halloween, my staff had the idea to each wear a T-shirt representing the various cartoon character emotions from the classic Pixar movie "Inside Out." There's fear, anger, sadness, disgust and, of course, joy.

Yes, it takes all of those emotions to deal with the challenges facing San Francisco. What we feel depends on what we encounter on a given day.

There is a lot to fix in San Francisco and it can feel daunting. But we must recognize the joy in our City. There is plenty of it. Think of every gathering of your friends and family. Or how you feel when you experience the natural beauty, cuisine and culture that defined San Francisco long before "doom loop" became a buzz phrase.

The problems in our City are real. So are the joyful things. We must keep that perspective. That's why my supervisor newsletter will always feature something joyful and inspiring.

My newsletter is emailed to 25,000 people, and I receive many replies after each edition. Most readers like the stories. But one or two angry readers will object to any positive article. They want my focus to be 100% on our troubles and problems. They demand I only write about the serious issues in our City because it's frivolous to mention anything else.

I tell them I'm working on problems every day. For example, public safety is my top priority because families need to feel safe if they are going to stay in San Francisco; our City's future depends on keeping families here. When people complained about my focus on bringing a first-ever night market to the Sunset, I reminded them it is more than a party. The night market actually addressed key issues: an activated street is a safer street and the boost to small businesses helps the local economy recover.

While I spend much of my time working behind the scenes on serious issues like crime and homelessness, an important part of my job is to boost morale and give people hope. The energy it takes to fix things is not sustainable without hope.

I believe we must always lead with joy. My focus is to build solid foundations of public safety, housing, education and the local economy – for the purpose of supporting joyful lives. We can celebrate the joy in San Francisco as we work to create more.

As the city supervisor for the Sunset neighborhoods, I wear the T-shirt with the joy character. I most recently wore it to kick off a bike parade to the ocean.

The eyes of the world were on San Francisco during the APEC Summit, which brought President Joe Biden and many global leaders to our City. I hosted a "Summit to Sunset" to show the international media that we are more joy than a doom loop.

I had planned a bike ride from Golden Gate Park to the Great Highway with a happy hour, live music and a sunset viewing party. We had more than 500 RSVPs for the ride, but a rainstorm got in the way.

As I waited in the rain and wondered if anyone would show up, I was amazed to see nearly 100 people gather for the ride. They wouldn't let anything dampen their spirit of joy. This is what the world must know about San Francisco. We are resilient, we tackle challenges and we shine.

I had the idea for "summit to sunset" after the overwhelming success of the pilot Sunset Night Market in September. That's when more than 10,000 people filled Irving Street. They were hungry, both literally and figuratively, for a fun experience with the community. They were 10,000 doom loop antidotes who reclaimed the streets and narrative of our City.

Look for a return of the Sunset Night Market in the spring.

The path to San Francisco's future seems to run through neighborhoods like the Sunset. The New York Times has mentioned it in several recent articles:

- "The Outer Sunset has flourished while downtown struggles."
- "Thousands of people packed Irving Street for the inaugural Sunset Night Market, eating Asian delicacies and watching ballerinas dance in the road."
- The Great Highway was named one of "52 places for a changed world" when used as a park.

I'm glad journalists are starting to notice how great the Sunset is. Residents have known it all along – and we still have lots of untapped potential. This holiday season, we have much to be grateful for. Let's encourage more joy as we work to create our best San Francisco.

You can sign up for my newsletter at engardio.com/subscribe.

Joel Engardio is the District 4 representative on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. He can be reached at engardiostaff@sfgov.org.

The members of the Park-Presidio Sunset Lions Club have been serving our community for the past 75 years. We continue to do so despite the challenges of a pandemic. Soon, we will resume regular meetings and invite our west side neighbors to participate.

Lions Pride: Serving the west side for the past 75 years!

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'Then and Now': Sloat Boulevard at Great Highway

Left: The Silver Moon Cafe at 2900 Sloat Blvd. near the Great Highway in 1946. *Photo courtesy of a private collector/Western Neighborhoods Project/OpenSFHistory.* Right: Homes and apartment buildings stand where businesses once lined the western end of Sloat Boulevard. This area is across the street from the San Francisco Zoo. *Photo by Michael Durand.*

Trocadero

Continued from page 1

Francisco Recreation and Park Department did not comply nor did not follow through the entire Administrative Code Section 6.6 to submit the resolution within 60 days of the declaration of emergency, which creates a problem or problematic issues for the committee to consider this as an emergency declaration," Chan told the board on Nov. 7. "As you know, it also means that it's really allowing the department to go about these types of repairs with sole-source contracts, without competitive bidding.

"But it is a commitment from the department that they will now, within 30 days of approval of these two declarations, submit a change to their protocol to be able to rectify and correct to make sure that this doesn't happen again, that they will submit a resolution within 60 days of the declaration of emergency," she said.

"It is also my intent that we will continue to work with the city attorney and figure out ways to potentially make amendments to Administrative Code Section 6.6 to really codify the not-to-exceed amount and to really figure out a way to enforce the 60-days submission," Chan said.

This was also included in the BLA report, which stated, "as the Public Works Department did in May 2023, we recommend that the Recreation and Park Department establish a written procedure for emergency declarations that includes the following elements: establish a project manager to oversee each emergency project; obtain an independent project cost estimate by a qualified technical expert; attempt to solicit quotes from at least three qualified bidders; work with the Contract Monitoring Division to ensure that Local Business Enterprises are aware of opportunities; post resulting emergency declarations and selected contractors on the Recreation and Park website; adhere to the notification and approval timelines from the appropriate oversight bodies within the timelines established in Administrative Code Section 6.60; and include emergency work cost estimates in its resolutions seeking Board of Supervisors approval of emergencies.

The Trocadero Clubhouse, seen here two years before the storm-related damage, is nestled among the redwoods in Sigmund Stern Grove at 19th Avenue and Sloat Boulevard. *Photo by Michael Durand.*

"The Recreation and Park Department should establish this procedure within 30 days and provide a copy of the procedure to the Board of Supervisors," The BLA report said. "Our office has always understood that the cost estimates of emergency work included in resolutions approving emergencies limit the amount of emergency contracting authority. This is to avoid, for example, a department obtaining Board approval for $1 million of emergency contracting authority but then spending $5 million on such work.

"In 2021, the Public Utilities Commission obtained Board approval of a resolution declaring an emergency at Stern Grove, which included a $4 million cost estimate but then in 2022 sought Board approval to increase the emergency authority to $20 million after an updated damage assessment.

"Similarly, in September 2023, the Board, Public Works and Public Health agreed to add a not-to-exceed amount and list of projects on Public Works' emergency declaration related to Laguna Honda, which we recommended as a way to limit the emergency contract authority of that request.

"Rec. and Park General Manager Ginsburg's emergency declaration for Stern Grove repairs was revised to increase the estimated amount from $850,000 to $3 million."

The BLA report also discussed the desire to change the relevant code section that Chan mentioned to the Board.

"The City Attorney's Office recently communicated to our office a different interpretation of the scope of the Board of Supervisors' approval of emergency declarations pursuant to Administrative Code Section 6.60, which is that the cost estimates of such emergency declarations are not binding," the report said.

"We do not believe this is good public policy and a significant departure from past practice that reduces the Board of Supervisors' historical oversight authority. We recommend that the Board of Supervisors amend Administrative Code Section 6.60 to clarify that the Board's approval of emergency declarations may limit the scope of the emergency contracting authority."

Kilduff's Korner By Paul Kilduff

Dude, we don't have time for selfies. Come on!

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